



5 Things You Can Do to Keep Your Shoreline Healthy

By April Overall, Canadian Wildlife Federation

The shallow waters and first 10 to 15 metres of shore around lakes and rivers contributes leaves, insects and wood to these ecosystems. These supplies are important sources of food and habitat for aquatic life. In celebration of their Love Your Lake program, the Canadian Wildlife Federation and Watersheds Canada have five helpful tips for shoreline property owners to keep their shorelines in tip top shape!

- 1. Go big or go home.** Planting a rich buffer along the shoreline is crucial to preventing pesticides from seeping into the waterway, reducing soil erosion and offering habitat for wildlife. When deciding on how big your buffer zone should be, please be generous.
- 2. Get digging.** Planting native plants along your shoreline is the best way to stop runoff from happening. To get an idea of what kind of vegetation you should plant, take a look around your property and see which ones are most abundant and thriving. Moreover, the vegetation that grows along the shoreline not only helps many species take cover from predators but can provide a food source too. Some suggested native shoreline shrubs include dogwoods and nannyberry.
- 3. Retire your lawn.** Isn't the whole point of a cottage to relax? Who needs an afternoon of lawn mowing, anyway? Up to 35 per cent of precipitation can run off lawns – taking with it all the fertilizers and pesticides used on it. By retiring your lawn and letting nature take over, you'll save yourself a ton of time and the planet too.
- 4. Rip out the right weeds.** It's easy for invasive plant species to take over your shoreline, if no one keeps them in check. But before you whip out the weed wacker, it's important you know which plants are invasive and which ones are beneficial. It'd be a shame for your property and the wildlife that call it home if you destroyed beneficial native plants. Do your homework before you get to work.
- 5. Offer some shelter.** In Ontario alone, more than 50 species of birds and mammals rely on cavity trees for their survival. Both coniferous and deciduous trees offer amazing shelter and healthy food sources for wildlife. And when trees die and fall on your property? Leave them be, if it's safe to do so. Even stumps and boulders can provide great shelter for wildlife.

» **For more helpful tips on keeping your lake healthy, visit [LoveYourLake.ca](https://www.loveyourlake.ca).**

This article was provided by the Canadian Wildlife Federation - a national, not-for-profit charitable organization dedicated to fostering awareness and appreciation of our natural world. By spreading knowledge of human impacts on the environment, sponsoring research, developing and delivering education programs, promoting the sustainable use of natural resources, recommending changes to policy and co-operating with like-minded partners, CWF encourages a future in which Canadians can live in harmony with nature. For more information visit [CanadianWildlifeFederation.ca](https://www.CanadianWildlifeFederation.ca).



Love Your Lake is a program of the Canadian Wildlife Federation and Watersheds Canada